

THE BATTLES IN WEST LOUISIANA.

THREE DAYS' FIGHTING.

DESPERATE VALOR OF THE TROOPS.

INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLES.

PLANS OF THE SEVERAL ENGAGEMENTS.

The Last Grand Charge and Repulse of the Enemy.

3,000 Killed and Wounded at a Single Discharge.

PARTIAL LIST OF CASUALTIES.

By the steamship Evening Star, Capt. Bell, arrived here on Saturday evening, we have dates from New Orleans to the 17th inst. To Purser Field we are indebted for the prompt delivery of our news packages.

From Our Special Correspondent.

ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, PLEASANT HILL, La., April 1—Midnight.

The somber shades of night cover one of the most bloody scenes that Louisiana has caused to be enacted within her borders. On Friday a portion of Gen. Banks's forces was attacked by a superior force of the enemy, four miles from the town of Mansfield. Gen. Lee, with 5,000 cavalry, was ceaselessly advancing, when the Rebels suddenly assailed his front in strong force, after considerable sharp skirmishing had been indulged in. Finding the enemy were pressing him heavily, Gen. Lee sent for a brigade of infantry to reinforce him. A brigade of infantry of the best war material—tried veterans from the 10th Army Corps—were at once sent forward. The Rebels fought vigorously and with desperation for several hours, driving back our troops with great loss, flanking both wings of our army, until a retreat was inevitable, if the enemy continued assaulting our right and front.

Our artillery, consisting of Nims's celebrated Massachusetts Battery, six guns, Rawle's 5th Regular Battery, 1st Indiana, and Chicago Mercantile Battery, together with two mountain howitzers, barked loud, long and furiously against the invading hosts; but notwithstanding the vast numbers of these savage messengers of death which mowed down the Rebel lines, the enemy continued to advance boldly, evincing a desperate determination to conquer or perish in the attempt. After so enemy had inflicted a most terrible blow upon the gallant little band who nobly opposed their fearful progress, a retreat was ordered, and while attempting escape, a sad disaster, more disgraceful than disastrous, fell our army.

I omitted to mention that a portion of the cavalry force behaved in the most cowardly manner, dashing off in all directions and in the wildest manner, breaking through our lines of infantry and boldly inflicting several of our men, by running over them, at the same time creating a panic among all our troops. All attempts to check these arrant cowards or to rally the men proved futile, and then began such a scene as only the annals of the famous first Bull Run battle can describe.

The enemy were not slow to perceive this, and improved the fine opportunity to appropriate three whole batteries and a portion of a fourth. Nims's Battery, 6 guns; Rawle's Battery, 2 guns; 1st Indiana, 4 guns; Chicago Mercantile, 6 guns, together with about 100 wagons, the whole of Gen. Lee's wagon train, laden with commissary stores, ammunition headquarters, and line officers' private baggage. The question now naturally arises, who is responsible for this great loss of life and immense amount of Government property? Was it proper to permit so large a train to advance in such close proximity to our front, while feeling for the enemy, whom we were well informed would make a desperate resistance this side of Shreveport?

Was it in strict accordance with the rules of military science to send forward so much artillery without infantry supports? Is there any rational excuse for ordering or permitting, which is the same thing, a small infantry force to push on eight miles in advance of a reserve force sufficient to prevent a flank movement by the enemy, or to strengthen our lines in case of sudden attack? These, and many more questions of a similar nature, are before the public.

The artillery was captured, because a cumbersome train, laden with superfluous luxuries, was blocking the road, preventing our artillists from saving their guns. The wagons were an easy prey to the vigilant foe, because they had no business there, and we politely offered thousands of dollars' worth of valuable supplies to the enemy by placing them within easy reach. Our troops were driven ten miles nearer to Pleasant Hill, when the 10th Army Corps, which had been sent forward to render assistance, was drawn up in line of battle, and witnessing the uncontrollable stampede of the cavalry, Gen. Franklin wisely opened his line of battle in the center, and permitted the demoralized cavalrymen to escape. As the gallant 13th Corps, with its heroic leader, fell back, the 10th Army Corps delivered several terrible volleys to the exultant foe, who were pursuing close on to the heels of our men, which proved the salvation of the entire army, administering such a severe fagulation a completely staggered the enemy. They were sent forward to support our front, and then two divisions responded to two separate calls, and the terrible sequel shows that we were whipped in detail, by neglecting to hurl a suitable force against the enemy at the auspicious moment, which might have been done. Eighteen guns captured, and one hundred and seventy wagon-loads of Government stores presented to our foes. I cannot extenuate our losses on Friday, but Gen. Ransom reports 1,250 men killed, wounded, and missing from the 1st Division, and 350 killed, wounded, and missing from the 3d Division, both of his 13th Corps. Gen. Ranson was severely wounded in his left knee by a Minie ball, while cheering on his men to the forlorn hope; and for a time it was feared amputation would be necessary to give his life. Such heroism as this unflinching officer displayed on the ever memorable 8th of April renders him more precious to our cause. I am glad to announce that the General is much better today, and no serious apprehensions are entertained regarding his recovery.

It is impossible, at this early date to give anything like a correct estimate of our losses in Friday's battle, but the last will not fall short of 2,000 men killed, wounded and missing. Indeed, as is full a list as our limited time would allow us to prepare in season for this steamer, which left a few hours after the arrival of our troops at Grand Ecore. I send by mail a hurriedly written account of the last grand battle on Saturday, April 9, in which the 10th Army Corps and a portion of Gen. A. J. Smith's forces participated.

The ignominious repulse of our troops on Friday, April 8, has caused the greatest indignation among both the officers and privates of the 13th and 16th Army Corps, and for a time their morale will suffer.

J. E. M.

THE THIRD DAY'S BATTLE.

THE BATTLES IN WEST LOUISIANA.

THE UNION DISASTER AT PLYMOUTH.

REBEL RAM AT WORK.

THE GUNBOATS BOMBHELL AND SOUTHFIELD SUNK.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUNBOAT MIAMI KILLED.

THE RAM IN POSSESSION OF THE RIVER.

OUR GARRISON CUT OFF FROM COMMUNICATION.

GEN. BUTLER CONFIDENT OF FINAL SUCCESS.

A FLEET OF GUNBOATS SENT TO DESTROY THE RAM.

RAILROAD, Saturday, April 23, 1864.

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